

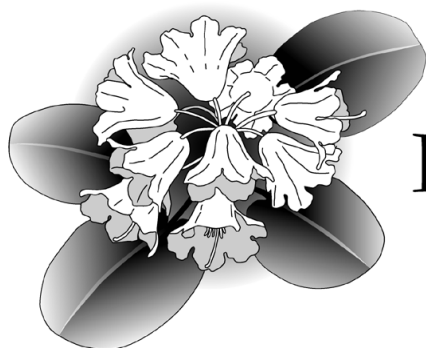
AtlanticRhodo

www.AtlanticRhodo.org

Volume 38: Number 3

November 2014





Atlantic Rhododendron & Horticultural Society

Our Mission

ARHS supports and promotes the development and exchange of expertise and material relating to the practice of creating and maintaining year-round garden landscapes featuring rhododendrons and other plants.

Inside this Issue

Program Calendar

Plant-Sale News

Donna Evers

ARHS Directors

Raymond Fielding

Raymond Fielding

Jean Henshall

Ruth Jackson

via Ian Christie & Sterling Levy

Remembering Elizabeth May

Donation Policy

Summer Memories

Beware the Petty Spurge

What I Learned at the Cuttings Workshop

Bulbs for Local Gardens

The Meconopsis Group Fact Sheet

Membership

Atlantic Rhododendron & Horticultural Society.

Fees are \$20.00 from September 1, 2014 to August 31, 2015, due September 2014. For benefits see ARHS website www.atlanticrhodo.org

American Rhododendron Society: ARHS is a chapter in District 12 of the American Rhododendron Society. Combined ARHS and ARS membership cost is \$50.00 Canadian. For benefits see www.rhododendron.org

Cheques, made payable to Atlantic Rhododendron & Horticultural Society should be sent to **Gloria Hardy 47 Melwood Ave. Halifax, NS B3N 1E4**

Please include name, address with postal code, e-mail address and telephone number, for organizational purposes only.

AtlanticRhodo is the Newsletter of the Atlantic Rhododendron & Horticultural Society. We welcome your comments, suggestions, articles, photos and other material for publication. Send all material to the editor.

Published three times a year. February, May and November

Editor: Sheila Stevenson, acting editor
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902 479-3740

Cover Photo: R. 'Bellefontaine' (*fortunei* ssp *fortunei* x *smirnowii*), A Kentville Research Station selection - [Photo Chris Helleiner]



Calendar of Events

ARHS meetings are held on the first Tuesday of the month, from September to May, at 7:30 p.m. usually in the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History Auditorium, 1747 Summer St., Halifax, unless otherwise noted. Paid parking is available in the Museum lot. Friends, guests and anyone interested in rhododendrons, azaleas or companion plants are always welcome at meetings or events.

- Tuesday, Dec. 2** **Christmas Party and Members' Slide Show**
Bring up to 5 images (once upon a time they were slides!) of plants, gardens, landscapes - either yours or someone else's - that you want to show and describe to the rest of us, as well as some sweet or savory finger food for the food table. ARHS supplies non-alcoholic beverages
- Tuesday, Jan. 6** **12 years later: Evaluating Joe Brueckner's hybrids in Nova Scotia - John Brett**
At the turn of the 21st century, ARHS members John Weagle and Ken Shannik led an effort to propagate some Joe Brueckner rhododendron hybrids with an eye to assessing their suitability in Atlantic Canada. Kristina Woodward, Brueckner's daughter, provided cuttings from the gardens in Mississauga, Ontario, to Dick Steele at Bayport Nursery. These were rooted and in 2002 were planted out at a number of garden locations in Nova Scotia. One collection of about 60 rhododendron hybrids was planted on Morris Island, in coastal Yarmouth county. John Brett will show photos of many of these plants taken in the Spring of 2014, 12 years after planting. He will also supply an update on the other Brueckner test collections, and a brief bio of this important but little known Canadian plant breeder with ties to Atlantic Canada. A long-time Ontario resident, Brueckner lived previously in Fredericton.
- Tuesday, Feb. 3** **Breeding for a Cold Climate - Sixty Years of Hybridizing in Nova Scotia - John Weagle**
- Tuesday, March 3** **English Garden Travel - Jenny Sandison**
- Tuesday, April 7** **To be announced**
- Tuesday, May 9** **Member to Member Sale of choice material**
- June: Date tba** **Annual Garden Tour and Potluck Supper Hosts: Frances and Tom Howard, Dartmouth.**

Any time, All the time : the Atlantic Rhododendron & Horticultural Society facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/groups/340130989363045/> Post and see questions, joys, sorrows, events, and plant and garden photos. We are now 154 individuals in the group

Thank you for avoiding the use of perfumes and scented products when you come to ARHS events.

American Rhododendron Society celebrates 70 at the Convention in Sidney BC, May 6-10, 2015.

Our Victoria BC correspondent and ARHS member, Carol Dancer, hopes some of us will make it to the 70th anniversary ARS 2015 Convention, May 6-10, 2015 in Sidney, BC. She says, "We are having great speakers, having heard all of them in the past. The venue is very convenient with lots of free parking and there will be both a plant sale and an auction."

The line-up of international experts includes Jim Barlup, Marc Colombel, Lionel de Rothschild, Ken Cox, Harold Greer, Guan Kaiyun, and Hartwig Schepker. Special presentations from ARS Exec Director, Laura Grant, and Dr. Ben Hall. New hybrids, species, and rare rhododendrons will be available for purchase. 29 private and public gardens will be on display over three days! Visit the website <http://2015rhodo.ca/> for comprehensive information and registration forms. ... Is anyone thinking of attending?

Editor's Notes

November ... when the new geophytes are in the ground and fallen leaves expose spring buds. Since the spring newsletter, the ARHS has had a lovely June day visiting coastal gardens and eating pot luck chez Sandy and Syd Dumaresque, a rich and stimulating series of presentations from visiting and local speakers, some practice with the new website, some new ideas from the public plant sale committee, and an AGM on Nov. 4.

We had what, from my point of view, was the perfect Steele Lecture in October from Steve Krebs. I hope to include some of that presentation in the next newsletter.

It was a treat to have Colorado native, Panayoti Keladeis, visit NS from May 23 to June 11.

- Read about his NS experiences at <http://prairiebreak.blogspot.ca/> Find the series of blogs in the Archives for May and June 2014.
- In his talk, "Sky Islands of the West", he showed us a range of interesting plants from western North America that he thinks could grow here. The list of those plants is also on his blogspot at : http://prairiebreak.blogspot.ca/p/blog-page_27.html

Send good wishes and happy thoughts to Bill Wilgenhof and Sharon Bryson. Bill returned home to the Willow Garden on Nov. 6 after a number of weeks in hospital. Keep well, Bill.

To our outgoing directors, we acknowledge the contributions each of you has made to keep the overall operation of ARHS and its parts on course during your terms: to our new web master and past president, Cora Swinamer, for her work as President, to retiring treasurer Jim Drysdale, to retiring past president Ruth Jackson, to retiring director and membership coordinator Ann Drysdale, and to retiring secretary Susan Boyd in her new BC home, we say "thanks".

We welcome new directors Rachel Martin, treasurer; Gloria Hardy, membership coordinator; Roslyn Duffus, director-at-large.

The ARHS board of directors hopes each one of you will help to shape the next incarnation of the club by filling out the survey that you'll receive via the surveymonkey – we hope before Christmas.

The next directors' meeting is scheduled for Sunday, Feb. 8, 2015 at 1:30 pm. Rachel Martin's house. 3859 Montblanc Terrace, Halifax. Storm date is Feb. 22 Members who just want to observe and eat treats are welcome.



A very warm welcome to our ARHS members who have joined or returned since the May Newsletter.

Jan Chapman
Norman A. Cockrane
Todd Corey
Barry & Lynne Dundas
Cathy Gregoire
Ann-Li Huestis
Pauline Anne Kemp
Faye Lifford
Helen MacLean
Maureen Summers
Peggy-Ann Pineau
Mary Ridgley

Halifax, Nova Scotia (Returning)
Lower Sackville, Nova Scotia
Allison, New Brunswick
Chester, Nova Scotia
Mahone Bay, Nova Scotia
Dartmouth, Nova Scotia (Returning)
Halifax, Nova Scotia
Halifax, Nova Scotia
Dartmouth, Nova Scotia (Returning)
Halifax, Nova Scotia
Halifax, Nova Scotia
Hammonds Plains, Nova Scotia



Positions of Responsibility

Officers and Directors of the Atlantic Rhododendron & Horticulture Society for 2014 -15

President:	this position available!	
Past President:	Cora Swinamar	902-826-7705
Vice-President:	this position available!	
Secretary:	Jean Henshall	902-477-2933
Treasurer:	Rachel Martin	902-425-3779
Director, Communication:	Sheila Stevenson	902 479-3740
Director, Education:	Bob Howard	902-532-0834
Director, Plant Material/ Horticulture:	Wendy Cornwall	902-477-6121
Director, Social:	Ralph Pineau	902-454- 9056
Director at Large and Membership Coordinator:	Gloria Hardy	902-477-4411
Director at Large:	Roslyn Duffus	902-861-3831

Other Positions of Responsibility

Newsletter Editor:	Sheila Stevenson	902 479-3740
Newsletter Layout:	Sterling Levy	902-861-1176
Website:	Cora Swinamar	902-826-7705
Library:	We need a successor to Jean Henshall, who has taken on the secretary's job.	
Coordinator, Seed Exchange:	Sharon Bryson	902-863-6307
Coordinator, Tissue Culture Plant Sale :	Jon Porter	902-350-0010
Coordinators, Members' Pre-ordered Sale:	Wendy Cornwall & Antitra Laycock	902-477-6121
Coordinator, Public Plant Sale:	Elizabeth Naylor	902-425-0557
Tech Support at Meetings:	Rachel Martin	902-425-3779
Gardens Care Outreach:	Chris Hopgood	902-479-0811
District 12 ARS Rep (American Rhodo Society):	Nick Yarmoshuk, Niagara Chapter	905-684-4703

Plant Sale News

Horticulture/Sales director, Wendy Cornwell, says

- Jon Porter hopes to have the list of tissue culture plants out to us later in November.
- Wendy and Anitra Laycock await the fall lists from the suppliers and expect the plant list for the Members' pre-ordered sale to be ready in February. They have taken on the job from stalwart, Ken Shannik.
- May 2 is the date for Members to pick up the plants. We are hoping, but not totally sure, that the Petal Pushers greenhouse will be available.
- Member to member sale is May 5
- The Public Sale, May 9, will be at the same venue as last year, St Thomas LeMarchant School gym, with a smaller number of imported plants and more material produced by us, the members ... Do you have some divisions potted up and sunk into the ground waiting for May 9?

Send seed contributions from interesting and somewhat unusual Rhododendrons, Azaleas, and Companion Plants **by December 1st** to seed exchange chair, Sharon Bryson, 407 Old Maryvale Road Antigonish NS B2G 2L1. Seeds should be cleaned (if possible), labelled, and have a brief description of the seed parent. If you have questions for Sharon, contact her at sbryson@ns.sympatico.ca

Those of us at the November meeting heard Jon Porter say we can expect an increase in the price per tissue culture plant. They come from the U.S., and the exchange rate on the Canadian dollar does not favour us. As well, the new owners of Briggs Nursery may have to increase their price since they want to stay in business!

Liz Naylor's Public Sale committee wants to add a show component to the May 9 Sale, evoking for some of us the days when Jenny Sandison produced lovely arrangements for the 'mini-show' accompanying the sale at the Museum on Summer St. That show got lost when the Museum started charging admission and the logistics got complicated. Those were the days when the competitive 'big show' came in June and featured a large array of individual rhodie trusses, each in their own beer bottle. Adding a show is a great idea and will add some buzz for members and public both. The committee will have more information in 2015. In the meantime, think about what plant material you might offer to such a show!

ARHS DONATIONS Policy APPROVED by the ARHS Directors, February 15, 2014.

The Atlantic Rhododendron & Horticultural Society, in keeping with its Mission Statement, 'To support and promote the development and exchange of expertise and material relating to the practice of creating, and maintaining year-round garden landscapes featuring Rhododendrons and other suitable plants.', can make donations to achieve this mission.

All donations must be budgeted by amount and recipient, and presented to the membership for approval in the budget process.

Any proposed increases or changes in recipient during the year would need to be approved by the membership at a regular monthly meeting. Members would have to be advised of the intention of the board to raise this, at least 2 weeks in advance of any meeting. There would need to be a quorum of at least 25 at the meeting.

The total amount of all donations, in any one year, shall not exceed \$2500.00

Donations can be in cash or in kind and all donations will be designated as such in the financial reports.

Donations can be to any not-for-profit organization or group or individual.

The board can make a decision to not go through with a budgeted donation during the year, if the board becomes aware of circumstances that it feels make the donation unnecessary or unattractive or if the financial circumstances of the ARHS deteriorate.

Remembering Elizabeth May



This is how many of us in the ARHS remember Liz. She was a willing helper with a ready smile at all our plant sales. She showed up and got things done.

Liz was a regular at ARHS meetings. She sat in the middle section near the back with the Dartmouth girls. Although we started to notice her absence at meetings only her closest friends knew that she was gravely ill. We were shocked and saddened to learn of her death on July 30, 2014. Liz was a very private person. She wanted no visitation, no service, and most definitely no fuss.

You are missed, Liz

Summer Memories.

By Ray Fielding



May 25, 2014 “This has been a great spring for violets. We have great swaths of purple violets. I have tentatively identified them as *Viola septentrionalis* but an interesting species brought to me many years ago by my botanist friend Tom Dilatush from New Jersey (who has recently died).”



May 25, 2014 “This is a bicoloured violet, *Viola sororia priciana*, common further south in the USA. Its common name is the Confederate Violet. The Confederate species is very attractive and loves our climate!!”



July 25, 2014. "*Liriodendron tulipifera*. My Tulip Tree was somewhat injured by "Arthur ", so these flowers were rescued from the ground! The tree is about a foot in diameter at the base, and very tall - probably 70 feet in height. I planted it around 1970 or so.



Himalayan Mayapple, *Podophyllum hexandrum*. Emerging shoots and blooms



AUG 5, 2014. Himalayan Mayapple, *Podophyllum hexandrum* , also known as the Indian Mayapple. It grows a foot or more and produces nice blossoms and these red fruits looking like red peppers. I collected seeds from a garden behind a church in Finland a few years ago ... I do have some seeds if you would like them. (Editors' note: Ray has sent seeds to Sharon Bryson for the Seed Exchange)

BEWARE the Petty Spurge - *Euphorbia peplus*.

By Raymond Fielding



This is the little plant whose white milky sap almost did in my eye! It has caused damage to the eyes of cattle and horses. On the other hand it has been used for centuries as a treatment for skin cancers! Before this season, I had never seen this plant. Now it fills my veggie garden, and is here & there all around the property.

I tried to contact the Depts. of the Environment , Agriculture, and Lands & Forests and got the proverbial runaround! I now have the name of an official who might be interested. This plant has spread through Europe, North America, and even Australia. I contacted a Forestry friend in Tasmania and he verified its widespread arrival in Australia. You can find all kinds of information on the Web.

Editor's Note:

Ray Fielding was pulling this out of his garden in September and must have brushed his hand over his eye. Presto! A painful, itchy, swollen eye and no sight. Not to mention many hours in Emergency. Thankfully, after a number of painful weeks, he is recovering and able to file this story.☺

Rhododendron Cuttings, a Show and Tell with Ken Shannik

By Jean Henshall



Figure 1 Preparing Cuttings for striking

Many thanks to Ken Shannik for a very informative and interesting workshop with an enthusiastic group of 23 on Sunday, September 14, 2014, at the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History. AND to Bob Howard for arranging it.

After his demonstration, Ken gave out cuttings of several rhododendrons and plastic glad bags, and a labelling pen was provided. ... But before that we learned about

Collecting When to take the cuttings and the degree of difficulty to root varies, according to each of the four rhododendron types :

1. Take Elepidote (large leafed) rhododendrons (such as 'Henry's Red') cuttings in mid to late August, September, or early October at the "snap" stage ... except Yaks, which you take in late January or February. Cuttings should be taken the day after a rain so they are well hydrated. They should be firm new growth with some flexibility.

2. Lepidote (small leafed) rhododendrons (such as 'Manitou') cuttings should be taken in late July, August, or at the very latest early September. Hybrids of *dauricum* & *mucronulatum*

should be taken on the soft side, mid July. Otherwise treat the same as Elepidotes.

3. Evergreen azaleas are the easiest to root. The growth can be woodier. Cuttings should be taken in mid to late August or early September. With care they can be rooted almost anytime.

4. Deciduous azaleas are the hardest to root and then have flush. Ken suggested layering was the best method. Pick a stem with new growth long enough to bend to the ground. Slice the stem on one side to expose the cambium. Lay the sliced area against the soil, or bury a few inches deep, and weigh down with a rock. The stem will take at least a year, and maybe 2 or more, to root. So when checking for roots, by very gently tugging at the stem, be extremely careful. When well rooted, the stem can be cut from the mother plant. This method can be used to reproduce all four types of rhododendrons, as well as many other shrubs.

When collecting, put the cuttings into a labelled plastic bag and store in a cool area.

Rooting Medium It's the same for all four types. It must be very light and airy to allow for the very fine hairlike roots of the cuttings. Ken uses a mix of coconut coir/peat/perlite in the proportions 1:1:2. If the peat is dry, wet it by mixing with hot water. After it is cooled, mix it with the coir and perlite. Place rooting medium, loose and light, in the containers. The coconut coir comes in chunks and must be expanded by adding water. Coir may be obtained from Halifax Seed or Home Depot. Perlite can be obtained at Halifax Seed or Kent. Peat moss is available at Halifax Seed.

The smaller lepidotes might appreciate a bit of sand in the mix to assure better contact with the tiny stem.

Containers *For Elepidotes Ken uses large-size cell packs. For Lepidotes and evergreen azaleas he uses small-size cell packs.* Both are placed in a flat (or tray) and covered with a deep clear plastic dome. This prevents the cuttings from drying out. Another method of covering the tray is to place semicircular hoops of wire in the tray and fasten plastic sheeting over the hoops and tray. A third option is to use an individual pot in a plastic bag to make a small greenhouse. Make sure the cuttings do not dry out. Maintain a high humidity.

Lighting *Ken recommends 18 to 24 hours daily under fluorescent lights. He uses one cool and one warm tube.* The lights should be very close to the plants. Ideally the bottom of the plant tray should be warm and the tops of the cuttings cool. A window with bright light and no direct sun can be used.

Preparing the cuttings for striking

1. Elepidotes The cutting should be from this year's growth, 3 -4 inches long (8-11 cm), preferably with a leaf apical (end) bud. Snap off apical flower buds. Remove all but the top 3 or 4 leaves. Gather the leaves together, place on a cutting board, and cut off the top half of the leaves at an angle. Scar both sides of the stem cutting just into the cambium layer. The cut should be at least 1/2inch (1.25 cm) long for elepidotes. Dip the cutting into rooting hormone and tap off excess. *The rooting hormone was Stim Root #2 for softwood cuttings.* Stim Root is available at Halifax Seed and Kent

2. Lepidotes Remove flower buds and take off any really-new growth and seed pods. For tiny leafed varieties, removed only the leaves in contact with the soil. For larger leaved varieties, removed all but the top 3 or 4 leaves. Scar stems just into the cambium. Dip into hormone and strike just like Elepidotes. *Ken used R. fastigiatum.*

3. Evergreen azaleas Prepare as for the other types. Evergreen azaleas will root easily, even older growth.

You may choose to use a fungicide at this point. Captain Steele placed cuttings in a very mild bleach and water mix for several minutes.

Striking Make a hole in the potting mix using a dibber. The eraser end of a pencil or a wooden chopstick makes a good dibber. Strike cutting (place) cutting in hole, making sure the mix is firmly against the cutting but remains light and airy. Write out a plant label with the name of the plant and the date the cutting was taken and place in the pot holding the struck cutting.

Watering *When all the cuttings were struck in the tray, Ken watered the entire tray using the fine rosette on his watering can.* Pouring water directly on the rooting medium will compact it. *Ken started the watering off to the side and slowly moved it over the planting tray.* Water until the water runs through. Make sure the cuttings do not dry out.

Waiting *Ken brought some cuttings he potted 6 weeks ago. Some had rooted, producing extremely fine roots. Others showed no signs of rooting.* A swelling callus forming on the end of the cutting is a good sign that the cutting will root. Any dead cuttings should be removed to prevent fungus. Rooting will take several months to more than a year, so patience is needed.

Once the cuttings are rooted they must be hardened off from the very high humidity in the plastic dome. This is done by propping up the dome for short periods that are gradually lengthened.

Potting On. When the cuttings have very good root systems, they may be potted on. This mix should have organic matter. *Ken's mix consists of one third peat moss + one third ground-up pine or spruce bark-mulch, + one third perlite + a slow release fertilizer.* Do not use cedar bark mulch. Promix is not suitable as it has too much fast-release fertilizer. Before removing the cuttings from the plastic dome the cuttings must be hardened off to the lower humidity of the room. Open the dome for a few minutes each day increasing the open time gradually until the cuttings are at the ambient humidity. The cuttings must be hardened off to the garden before planting outside. Cuttings should never freeze.

Materials list

Taking cuttings

Preparing cuttings for striking

Striking

Potting mixes and prep

Watering

Lighting

pruners, plastic zip bags, permanent marker

cutting board, box cutter, rooting hormone

cell packs or small pots, potting mix, domed container or tray covered with clear plastic or clear, plastic bags to make individual green houses, an eraser end or chopstick as a dibber.

peat moss, perlite, coconut coir, mixing container, warm water, large spoon

watering can with a fine rosette

Ken uses one cool and one warm tube. A window with bright light and no direct sun can be used.



Figure 2 Cuttings ready for striking



Figure 3 Ready for striking



Figure 4 Elepidote cutting ready for striking



Figure 5 Greenhouse options



Figure 6 More greenhouse options



Figure 7 Struck cuttings

Bulbs for Local Gardens

Text from the September 2014 illustrated talk by Ruth Jackson



In the world of Geophytes, what's what ?

- A geophyte is a perennial plant propagated by means of underground buds. Bulbs, corms, tubers, and rhizomes are geophytes.
- Gardeners tend to use the word 'bulb' for all lumpy underground structures that store food and moisture.
 - True bulbs are modified leaves, called scales. e.g. tulips, daffodils, lilies, fritillary, muscari
 - Corms are modified stem growth with a tunic. A new corm is formed every year. e.g. crocus, colchicum, crocosmia
 - Tubers and rhizomes are modified stem growth without a tunic. e.g. *Anemone blanda*, arisema, cyclamen, iris, trillium

Key to success

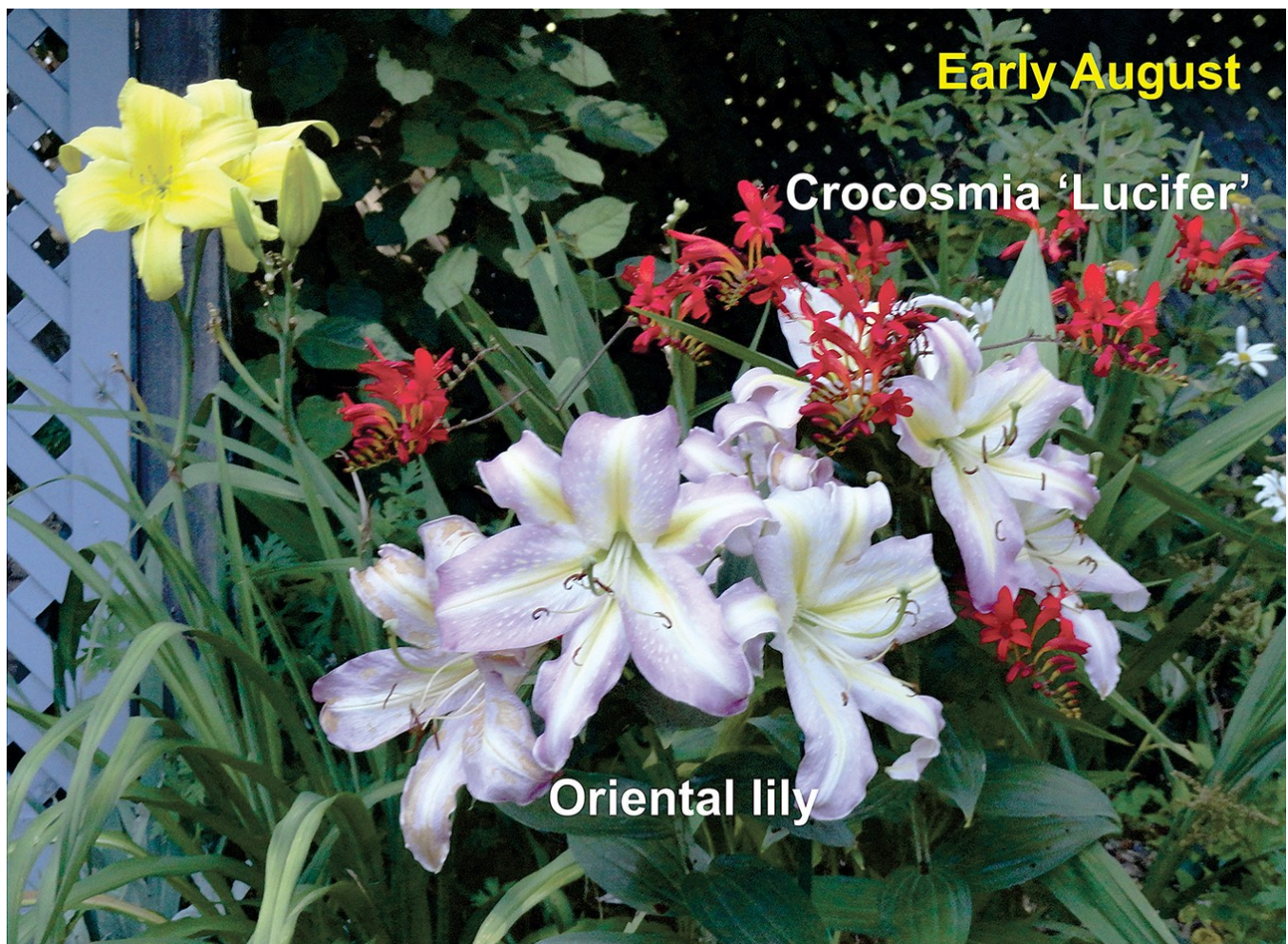
- Drainage, drainage, drainage

Timing Priorities for Planting

- Plant tubers such as *Anemone blanda* and *Eranthis hyemalis* (winter aconite) earliest, before planting bulbs and corms, because tubers dry out. Winter aconite (tubers) and snowdrops (small geophyte) from commercial sources are difficult to establish.
- Plant bulbs without tunics before those with tunics. *Anemone blanda*, arisema, cyclamen, iris, trillium
- Plant small before large.
- Tulips are better planted late to prevent leaf growth - about mid October here - when the leaves fall

Layer bulbs from bottom to top, aka lasagna planting,

- Lillium (including the Asiatics, Trumpets, and Orientals) Lilies have fleshy roots that dry out quickly.
- Narcissi and Allium
- Tulips
- Muscari, Scilla, Iris reticulata, Crocus



To control the Lily beetle (the orange terrorist)

- The beetles hide in the top half inch of the soil.
- Hand pick
- Use Neem oil insecticide and fungicide every 5-7 days
- Wood ash (Bert and Becky's Bulbs)
- Pyrethroid insecticides (U of Mass Extension)

Perennial tulips

"Darwin Hybrid Tulips provide blooms up to five years with bud counts actually increasing for the first three years in your perennial Tulip garden." - White Flower Farm

"Species tulips, Fosteriana, Gregii and Darwin hybrids colonize and repeat well." - Vesey's Seeds

Beautiful Blues from minor Bulbs

• *'long lived, easy going, floriferous'* - Ann Lovejoy

- Muscari
- Anemone blanda
- Scilla siberica
- Puschkinia scilloides var. libanotica
- Chinodoxa
- Iris reticulata

Dealing with dying foliage of bulbs

- Do not tie up foliage
- Remove seed heads from tulips
- Plant in centre of beds so perennials will conceal the foliage

Fertilizing in the fall

- For first year, nothing is needed
- Thereafter 3 options
 - Organic compost and mulch or
 - Slow-release bulb food or
 - Bone meal & 10-10-10 (NPK) fast-release fertilizer @ 1 tbsp /sq ft

Fertilizing in the spring

- For first year, nothing is needed
- Thereafter :
 - if you used compost and mulch in the fall nothing is needed
 - if you used fast release fertilizer in the fall, apply a nitrogen-rich fast-release NPK in the Spring as soon as the shoots emerge

Advice on fertilizing bulbs from “*Buried Treasures*, a book with “an abundance of trustworthy information about the care and cultivation of every major and minor genus of bulb-forming plant.”

- Fertilize with high concentration of Nitrogen in late winter

Planting and fertilizing Trilliums

- Fertilize with 12 -12 -12 before foliage is produced

The Meconopsis Group

By Sterling Levy

Those of us who were privileged to hear Ian Chrisite’s great presentations last Spring had our appetites whetted for the famous “Blue Poppy” *Meconopsis baileyi* (*M. betonicifolia*). The apparent ease with which they grow in Scotland either makes us envious or increases our determination to succeed with them here.

There is an organization in the UK dedicated to meconopsis. The **Meconopsis Group** was formed in 1998 to promote the genus which now includes 79 species in a wide variety of sizes and colours other than blue.

The excellent Web site **www.meconopsis.org** is a gold mine of information and practical tips on growing meconopsis in the garden as well as news of new species and changes in classification. There are photos of the plants, blooms and even seed pods which are often used as an aid in identification. There are also a number of “Fact Sheets” on specific plants, one of which is included in this issue. The others can be found on the Web site (www.meconopsis.org/pages/factsheets.html)

The annual Membership cost is £13 and includes 10 packets of seed from the group’s seed exchange.

An excellent resource for all of us who want to grow these great plants.

MECONOPSIS 'LINGHOLM'

(Fertile Blue Group)



History

Meconopsis 'Lingholm' is an excellent fertile hybrid large blue poppy which reputedly appeared in a Cumbrian garden in the late 1970s – apparently due to the chance event of a doubling of its chromosomes. Current research indicates that the same fertility-restoring event may have occurred more than once in the last 30 years. The other hybrid, large-flowered, big blue Himalayan poppies known to gardeners are sterile.

Description

The main characteristics that distinguish *Meconopsis* 'Lingholm' are:

- LARGE (10cm), substantial, DEEP SKY-BLUE FLOWERS.
- Very bristly, plump, elongated seed capsules filled with ABUNDANT FERTILE SEED [large (1-1.5 x 2-3mm), rather angular and kidney-shaped, dark-brown and pitted giving a rough-looking surface].
- Leaves covered with a pile of long hairs, especially prominent when emerging in early spring.
- Soundly perennial in suitable conditions.

Naming of the Himalayan Blue Poppies

The Himalayan Blue Poppies are represented in gardens in three main guises:

1. Most commonly grown is the smaller-flowered species, *M. betonicifolia*.
2. Larger-flowered **sterile** hybrids of long-standing, e.g. *M.* 'Slieve Donard'.
3. Larger-flowered **fertile** hybrids which have appeared more recently, e.g. *M.* 'Lingholm'.

Unfortunately, over the years the identities and names of these poppies have become confused. To address these problems the **MECONOPSIS GROUP** was formed in 1998. One important recommendation of the **Meconopsis Group** is that the majority of seed-raised big perennial blue poppies (apart from true species) are best recognised by one name, i.e. *Meconopsis* 'Lingholm'. **This valid name should replace the frequent, erroneous, confusing and interchangeable use of *M. x sheldonii*, *M. grandis* etc. for the selfsame plants.**

The **Meconopsis Group** is primarily a study group which welcomes relevant information, enquiries and applications for new membership. At present we have well in excess of 100 members.

Please apply to: Dr. Evelyn Stevens, The Linns, Sheriffmuir, Dunblane, Perthshire FK15 0LP.
Tel/Fax: 01786 822295 for further information.